

# Manaan: Depths of History

## Planet Hoppers: February 2004

By [Cory Herndon](#)

Welcome to "Planet Hoppers," where each month, we bring you a set of articles on a particular world in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* galaxy that a Gamemaster can use separately or as a linked series of events.

This month, four tales that explore the watery planet Manaan's fate under Palpatine's New Order. Be sure to check back each week for a new installment.



### Part 1: Backwater

In which an unimpressed visitor details why she won't be returning to Manaan's Ahto Luxury Resort.

### Part 2: Whatever Happened to the Selkath?

In which a poorly researched tourist's guide describes the history of Manaan and its people.

### Part 3: The Order of Shasa

In which a young Selkath leaves his menial job to join a secret sect of Selkath Force adepts.

### Part 4: Blades of Rebellion

In which the Order of Shasa lead an uprising against the Imperial occupation.

### **About the Author**

One-time *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* editor Cory J. Herndon is now a freelancer. Cory's work has appeared in *Amazing Stories*, *Duelist*, *TopDeck*, *Star Wars Gamer*, *Dragon*, and SCIFI.com. He has done additional design work on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook (primarily the Droids chapter), *The Dark Side Sourcebook* (creatures and archetypes), and the *Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*. He is also the author of Volumes 5 and 6 of the **Magic: The Gathering Encyclopedia**. Cory's short story "Like Spider's Silk" appears in the *Secrets of Magic* Anthology. He asks that you please purchase a copy of it and the **D&D** novel *The Living Dead* for every room in your home. Cory is currently authoring original content for Xbox.com, writing the third book in an upcoming *Magic: The Gathering* novel trilogy, and continuing to design *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* material for the Wizards website.

# Part 1: Backwater

By [Cory Herndon](#)

*The water world Manaan was, at one time, quite possibly the most important planet in the galaxy outside Coruscant. As the only known source of kolto—a miraculous healing agent that historians believe was several times more effective than modern bacta—Manaan was hotly contested by the Republic and the Sith during Darth Malak's war of conquest four millennia ago. The planet was able to maintain strict neutrality in the conflict for some time, until for mysterious reasons that are still argued in academic circles, kolto production suffered a devastating setback. Without kolto, Manaan rapidly fell into decline. Never a member of the Republic, their petition to join the body was rebuffed, causing the proud native Selkath to swear that their world would never again seek to join with offworlders for any reason.*

*By the time Emperor Palpatine rose to power, few galactic citizens even remembered that Manaan existed. When the kolto flowed, ships went out of their way to visit the world, but the old hyperspace routes fell out of use long before even Master Yoda began his Jedi studies. Yet the Emperor remembered, and he also knew that Manaan still held many secrets that could be of use to him. The Imperial expeditionary forces found a planet that had fallen into a primitive state populated by natives who barely understood Basic any more, living in undersea caverns far below the surface of the water.*

*The Imperial troops expected a simple hunting mission, but their superiors had other plans. At the behest of Lord Vader himself, they enslaved the population and built a resort?*

**Planet:** Manaan

**Planet Type:** Water world

**Climate:** Temperate

**Terrain:** Planetwide ocean, islands

**Atmosphere:** Breathable

**Gravity:** 1.3 standard

**Diameter:** 14,211 km

**Length of Day:** 26 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 422 local days

**Sentient Species:** Selkath, Humans

**Language:** Basic, Selkath

**Population:** 1.8 million

**Species Mix:** Selkath 80%, Humans 18%, other 2%

**Government:** Tribal clans

**Major Exports:** Seafood, clothing, tourism

**Major Imports:** High technology, foodstuffs, building materials

**Region:** Mid Rim

**System/Star:** Pyrshak

Planets	Type	Moons
Pyr	Molten rock	0
Manaan	Water world	0
Navlaas	Gas giant	8

## ATTN: Mr. Olodondo Berzix, Manager, Ahto Luxury Resorts RE: False Advertising

Mr. Berzix,

I have attempted to contact you by HoloNet and comlink, and I've even tried to visit you in person, but whenever I arrived at your offices in East Ahto, you were mysteriously unavailable. I am left with no choice but to send my complaints in this datapad, which I have left with your assistant. I must register my disappointment with Ahto Luxury Resorts, the planet Manaan in general, and the description of both in your *Guide to Beautiful Manaan*. I have four major complaints.



First, your guide describes "an unending planetwide ocean of sparkling blue, unmarred by dry land, as far as the eye can see." Maybe that was the case a hundred years ago, but have

you looked outside your window at that ocean lately? It's got a sickly cast and reeks of industrial pollution. Furthermore, your "unending ocean" that's "unmarred by dry land" is full of filthy tribes of aliens living on rafts *and* ugly, muddy islands. These muddy islands also reek of pollution, and from the air, they look like lesions.

Second, the native slaves. The guide claims these Selkath are just intelligent enough to be good servants, but every one I have met appears to be as dumb as a bantha and twice as stubborn. They are not in any way "willing to serve," at least not without being told at least half a dozen times, and what little Basic any of them understand seems to be used only for insolence.

Third, I have yet to see a single "gourmet restaurant" that wasn't infested with spacehopping low-lives out to take my money. When I did finally receive my meal (two hours after I ordered it), it was infested with water lice. Your chef claimed it was seasoning. I also witnessed with my own eyes a dealer in your casino who was cheating at sabacc. If your dealers *must* cheat at cards, please at least train them well enough to cheat without insulting my intelligence.

Finally, the facilities-how old *is* this place? Your guide claims that Ahto opened to visitors a little over ten years ago, but if that's the case, no one's performed a thorough cleaning or maintenance checkup since then. It might have been more pleasant to stay on a Selkath rafttown. Your floating resort leaks, for one thing, and the elevator leading to the underwater viewing dome has been out of operation since we arrived a month before. In other places, the walls are overgrown with some kind of smelly aquatic plant life that caused my mate to break out in a rash-which I expect you to pay to have treated.

We will not be returning to Ahto Luxury Resorts. Please consider this letter your notification that I am willing to initiate legal proceedings if necessary.

- Zavol Shan, Bungalow 17

## Part 2: Whatever Happened to the Selkath?

By [Cory Herndon](#)

*The halt of significant kolto production that caused the rapid departure of Manaan from the galactic stage and virtually ended contact with the Republic sent the planet spiraling into a technological decline. Most of the native Selkath eventually abandoned Ahto, the floating city that had been constructed almost exclusively for the use of off-worlders, and returned to living in the depths. After less than hundred years, the planetary government completely collapsed. Young warlords with no memory of Manaan's era of economic prosperity fought among themselves, and within another hundred years had broken Selkath society into tribal clans.*

*When the Imperials arrived with thousands of aquatically trained stormtroopers and a pair of Star Destroyers, the Selkath had become so primitive that a few blasts of the energy weapons caused entire clans to swear fealty to the Empire. But to be on the safe side, the commander of the expeditionary forces ordered the deployment of depth charges dropped from orbit to wipe out the underwater villages, towns, and cities wherever they could be found-after the most stubborn Selkath in the clan had been executed with their kin and the rest rounded up as slaves.*

*During their period of Imperial subjugation, most Selkath are broken, oppressed people who no longer have any hope that their lives will improve. Unable to return to the sea lest they incur the wrath of the Empire (which maintains a pair of Star Destroyers in the system, unusual to say the least for a relatively minor resort planet), they have been forced to live in floating shantytowns that can be found just a few kilometers from Ahto on all sides. As far as the Empire knows, Manaan's entire native population has been forced from the depths, humiliated, and utterly demoralized.*

*As far as the Empire knows.*

*Of course, the complimentary copy of the Guide to Beautiful Manaan every tourist receives has a slightly different take on the Selkath.*

### The Selkath Way

While enjoying your stay on Manaan, be sure to avail yourself of the native Selkath. Though little more than savages when the brave forces of the Empire brought civilization back to this world after thousands of years, they have quickly adapted to their roles as slaves in Manaan's new society. Yes, the Selkath are waiting to satisfy your every need-whether you desire a fresh drink, seek a tantalizing taste of local cuisine, fancy a visit to the humidity enclosures, or simply need your room cleaned, these noble creatures are always willing to serve and ready with a fascinating piece of local lore.

*Note: Our Hutt visitors are encouraged to enquire about our special gourmet meals not open to the general public. If you like the way the Selkath serve you, wait until one is served to you by Alhond Robari, head chef of the Firaxa Room.*

### Gamemaster Notes: The Selkath

The Selkath are amphibious humanoids with sleek, hydrodynamic bodies and a throaty, guttural language. They are at home in the depths of the sea, but can just as easily survive on the surface thanks to concealed gill slits that draw oxygen from either water or air. Their long hands are tipped in poisonous claws, but in the same way the Wookiees of Kashyyyk refrain from using their retractable claws, Selkath consider their poison to be socially unacceptable to use in a fight. Only a maddened or enraged Selkath might consider such a thing, even if enslaved by a brutish thug or provoked by a foolish tourist.



The natives are neither as primitive nor as stupid as the owners of Ahto Luxury Resorts would have visitors believe. Though enslaved and made to live in squalor outside Ahto, the forced relocation has brought them together as a people once more. In the floating shantytowns made from recycled ship parts and wreckage salvaged from the ocean floor, many Selkath secretly organize a resistance movement that is gradually gaining steam. They have not yet scored a major blow against the occupiers of Manaan, but it is only a matter of time before their lurking anger explodes into action like a hungry firaxan shark.

## Species Traits

- +2 Con, -2 Cha.
- +6 species bonus to Swim checks.
- +4 species bonus on Telepathy checks (Selkath are not active telepaths but are quite sensitive to telepathy in other species).
- +2 species bonus on all saves made underwater.
- -2 on all saves in a dry environment.
- **Automatic Languages:** Selkath.
- **Breathe Underwater:** Selkath cannot drown in water.
- **Poison:** Selkath claws can inject venom into an enemy that deals 2d6 points of damage on a successful attack (DC 18 Fort save) and another 1d6 points after 5 rounds (DC 14 Fort save). Using poison in a fight is considered unseemly by many Selkath and was outlawed on ancient Manaan.

**Selkath Commoner (Rebellion Era):** Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 0/12; Atk +0 melee (1d3 + poison, claws) or +0 ranged; SQ Species traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8. Challenge Code A.

*Equipment:* Simple clothing, personal belongings.

*Skills:* Craft +2, Knowledge +2, Swim +6.

*Feats:* None.

## Part 3: The Order of Shasa

By [Cory Herndon](#)

*Though their origins were lost to history when Manaan fell into economic decline, the Order of Shasa has protected the Selkath for thousands of years. According to their own legends, the order was founded by a Selkath that had studied with the Jedi, or perhaps the Sith. With no input or influence from either group once the world was abandoned by the rest of the galaxy, these Force adepts have had to find their own way through the gray areas between darkness and light-but always with the ultimate safety of the Selkath people in mind.*

*Unfortunately for the Manaan natives, even the order was powerless to stop the initial Imperial assault on the planet. Their numbers were simply too small and their understanding of the Force too limited. Yet they continued to train in their secret base in the ruins of an ancient underwater mining facility, awaiting the moment when they would be able to strike back and drive the invaders off their homeworld.*

### Prestige Class: Shasan Adept

At the time of the Ahto uprising, more than two hundred adepts comprised the Order of Shasa. Though their numbers were reduced in the incident, the Order continued to train any Force-sensitive Selkath willing to join them. Considering the small population of natives left on the planet, they have discovered a surprising number of candidates, which serves to reinforce the Order's belief that the Selkath have been chosen by the Force for greatness. Initiates must study for months, sometimes years, before they are formally inducted. Like the Jedi and the Sith, the Order usually pairs an initiate with an experienced trainer during this period.

Members of the Order follow a simple code: The protection of the Selkath is the first priority, and all other considerations are secondary. Yet many of the Order are scholars as well, storytellers and mythweavers who guard what knowledge remains of the planet's history and pass it on in the form of stirring tales of Manaan's glorious past-made even more stirring with the influence of the Force.

The Order's weapon of choice is a simple curved sword called a *fira* that each adept must construct for himself from metal found only in the Hrakert rift. This metal, the remnants of a massive ancient kolto harvester, is infused with synthesized cortosis that makes the blades resistant to lightsabers. The blade itself must be shaped and sharpened using the heat of volcanic vents on the sea floor, which makes the experience as dangerous as it is challenging. Only when the *fira* is complete will the adept be considered a member of the Order of Shasa.



### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Shasan adept, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +3.

**Skills:** Battlemind 4 ranks *or* Force Grip 4 ranks *or* Knowledge (Manaan) 8 ranks, Craft (*fira*) 4 ranks, Enhance Ability 4 ranks, Survival 4 ranks.

**Feats:** Alter, Control, Force-Sensitive, Sense, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*fira*).

**Reputation:** +1.

**Dark Side Points:** 4

**Species:** Only Selkath may become a Shasan adept.

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+2	+1	+2	Weapon focus (fira)	+2	+0
2	+1	+3	+2	+3	Progenitor's call (+2)	+2	+0
3	+2	+3	+2	+4	Bonus feat	+3	+1
4	+3	+4	+2	+4	Skill emphasis	+3	+1
5	+4	+4	+3	+5	Progenitor's call (+3)	+4	+2
6	+5	+5	+3	+6	Uncanny dodge (Dex)	+4	+2
7	+6	+5	+4	+6	Comprehend speech	+5	+2
8	+7	+6	+4	+7	Progenitor's call (+4)	+5	+3
9	+8	+6	+4	+8	Uncanny dodge (flanking)	+6	+3
10	+9	+7	+5	+8	Progenitor's call (+5)	+7	+4

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

**Vitality:** Members of the Order of Shasa gain 1d8 vitality points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

## CLASS SKILLS

The Shasan adept's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str). All Force skills for which the Shasan adept qualifies are considered class skills.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4+ Int modifier

## CLASS FEATURES

**Weapon Focus (fira):** Intense training in the chosen weapon of the Order grants the Shasan adept this feat for free at 1st level.

**Progenitor's Call:** At 2nd level, the Shasan adept learns to draw on the power of the Progenitor through the Force and may add a circumstance bonus to his attack or defense roll for 3 rounds per day, which need not be consecutive. At 5th, 8th, and 10th level, the bonus increases by 1.

**Bonus Feat:** At 3rd level, the adept can choose a bonus feat (for which he meets the prerequisites) from the following list: Acrobatic, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Athletic, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Emphasis, Stamina, Toughness, Track.

**Skill Emphasis:** At 4th level, the Shasan adept gains the Skill Emphasis feat for free, but must apply it to a Force skill.

**Uncanny Dodge:** The feature functions as per the Scout class description in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook, with the exception that the Shasan adept earns the ability at 6th level and gains the flanking bonus at 9th level.

**Comprehend Speech:** The Shasan adept earns this ability at 7th level. For details, see the Force Adept class description in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook.



## Part 4: Blades of Rebellion

By [Cory Herndon](#)

*Not long before the Battle of Endor, a stranger came to Manaan-an offworlder seeking to meet with the secret Order of Shasa. The fact that this Human even knew of the Order's existence was unsettling to them, but he brought them valuable information about Imperial troop movements and guard schedules that gave them their best chance in memory to rid the planet of the Empire. After the battle, the Human returned with an offer of alliance that would make the Order stronger than ever.*

### The Stranger

**Excerpted from The Battle of Ahto: A Memoir by Fewash Welko**

Translated from the original Selkath

We couldn't begin to guess where the visitor had gotten such extensive information, but it was readily apparent even to the rawest initiate that he was steeped in the Force. He knew everything about our Order, and found us without the slightest difficulty. And though he attempted to hide his identity from us in a dark hood, the rebreather he wore marked him as an offworlder, which on Manaan meant a Human. A Human who was more than willing to help us attack the Imperial invaders, and asked only for our trust in return.

As we discovered, the strange Human's information was not just good-it was perfect. Ahto's guard complement had just been replaced with raw recruits from their academy. According to our visitor, Manaan and her people were considered so unimportant that the Empire was no longer bothering to send more than a single veteran per platoon with each troop rotation.

We struck on the first night of duty for those new guards.

A dozen teams of the Order's finest warriors-two hundred of us in all-entered Ahto through the resort's waste disposal system so that our presence would not be revealed until we chose to reveal it ourselves. Under normal circumstances, wallowing in that fetid water would have been unbearable, but the stranger had told us it would not affect us-and because he said it, it was true. It wasn't until I was out of the pipes that I realized he must have used the Force to bolster our confidence.

Could it be? Had the legendary Jedi returned to aid their brothers in the hour of need?

Once inside, the guards didn't stand a chance. Many were cut down where they stood in the initial attack, killed silently and with patience. By the time the others figured out what had happened, their commander had already issued the order to evacuate what was left of his forces to one of the mighty space vessels that swam the sky above Manaan. They left so quickly, they apparently forgot about the tourists that had taken refuge in their cabins, staterooms, and anywhere else they thought they could escape us. Then something . . . happened.

We were prepared to allow the tourists to leave. The Human tourists were unarmed and terrified, and I could feel their fear like a palpable thing. I could taste it like a raw gizka steak in my mouth. I myself was only a few steps away from a Human female and her hatchling, ready to guide them to the docking bays personally if necessary.

But I did not.

As soon as I reached my hand out to the Humans, I noticed that I had drawn my fira without thinking. As the realization struck me, I was seized by the need for blood. That is the only way I can describe it-suddenly, I needed to see the blood of my foe on the fira blade, wanted to taste it, wanted nothing more than to slice these Humans and everything they represented into quivering lumps of flesh and bone. I was no longer a Selkath, I was a firaxan shark, existing only to kill and consume. And I did. We all did.





The strange Human returned when the grisly work was done. He strode through the carnage without stopping, ignoring the bodies, the death rattles and last gasps of the unarmed Humans we'd murdered in cold-blooded revenge, and the shocked disbelief on our own faces at the realization of what we'd done. When he reached me, he drew back his hood, revealing a helmet as black as the Hrakert Rift. I felt my fingertips burning, and realized I was spontaneously generating venom.

"Stranger," I asked, "What have we done? We are not murderers. We are warriors. Those troopers deserved this, but-forgive us, stranger. We could not control ourselves. We are not worthy to be the students of a Jedi."

"The Jedi are dead. But you are strong," the stranger replied in a throaty growl that resonated weirdly in his helmet and my own head, as if he was speaking from two directions at once. "You sought revenge, the most natural thing in the galaxy. And now that you have set down that path, forever shall it guide you. We serve the same master now, you and I. And when you are ready, you will be unleashed at our master's discretion." He placed a gloved hand on my shoulder and added, "Revenge will be your guide."

## Shasan Fira Sword

Each Shasan adept forges his or her own fira in the underwater volcanic vents near the ruins of an ancient kolto harvester. This requires 3d4 hours and three Craft checks against DC 12, 16, and 20, in that order.

A cortosis weapon constructed from the hull of the harvester (the material shielded life in Manaan's oceans from the massive machine's oversized power plant during a time when the fiber was much easier to come by), the Shasan fira is resistant to lightsaber blades. If the wielder makes a critical miss when fighting an opponent with a lightsaber (that is, the wielder rolls a natural 1 on his attack), he must make a DC 14 Reflex save to prevent the fira from shattering. A shattered fira cannot be repaired, only replaced.

**Cost:** Not for sale **Damage:** 3d6 **Crit:** 19-20

**Type:** Slashing **Range:** - **Weight:** 3 kg

**Stun Fort DC:** - **Size:** Medium **Group:** Exotic